DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 574 FL 013 466

AUTHOR Bates, Clif
TITLE Language Considerations When Working with Eskimo Students.
PUB DATE 82
NOTE 29p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Alaska Natives; Beginning Reading; *Cultural Influences; Elementary Education; *English Instruction; *Eskimos; Language Attitudes; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Readiness; Rural Population; Student Teacher Relationship; Teaching Methods; Writing Instruction; Writing Readiness
IDENTIFIERS *Alaska

ABSTRACT

Cultural influences and the particular language needs of Eskimo children are considered, along with implications for curriculum and instruction. The Eskimos are of a culture and environment where there is little experience with the purpose of literacy and little exposure to reading and writing behavior, linguistic concepts, or language usage. Eskimo children also have vastly different life experiences, beliefs, values, and ways of explaining things that happen. They live in isolated and impoverished regions and are removed from western society and lack appropriate knowledge of the world to read materials prepared for children with different backgrounds. It is maintained that reading and writing tasks are being introduced to Eskimo students before they are cognitively ready. Instructional approaches that would be appropriate for the Eskimo student include: prereading activities, guided reading, vocabulary work, and rewriting of text material. It is suggested that to aid these children in obtaining language skills, it would be beneficial to spend time in preparing for and discussing the purposes of reading and writing. It cannot be assumed by the teacher that the students know concepts like "word," "letter," and "number." In addition, the teacher must be suitable for Eskimo students. Warmth and nonverbal communication (e.g., smiling, close body distance, and assuming the same postural level) are important to Eskimo students. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS
When Working With
ESKIMO STUDENTS

Clif Bates
P.O. Box 1352
Bethel, Alaska 99559
(907) 543-3632

Copyright 1982

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Cliff Bates

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Collier (1977) writes that after five years of research, it is clear that Eskimo education has largely failed. This paper discusses one of the major reasons for this failure—the educational system's lack of consideration of the Eskimos' unique language situation. Their prevalent poor academic abilities and low educational successes stem, in part, from problems with their English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. As Stodolsky and Lesser (1967) explain, "verbal ability has long been regarded as the best single predictor of academic success" (p. 39). English is taught intensely in the schools "with teaching skills and methods that are excellent in terms of standard American educational practices, but since most Eskimos are unable to read and speak clear English, we must question how appropriate these skills and methods and equipment are for the Eskimos in the Arctic" (Collier, 1973, p. 115). The educational process is based on communication. Since there are gross problems in this area, in order for the education system to be successful, it must adapt itself to fit the particular language needs of these Eskimo children.

There are about 35,000 Eskimos living in Alaska. Some of them reside in the two major urban areas, Anchorage and Fairbanks, but the majority live in over one hundred villages and four small towns (Bethel, Nome, Kotzebue and Barrow). They can be divided into two main language groups, the Inupiaq

of the north and northwest and the Yupik of Western Alaska. Vallee (1972) explains it is well known that the Eskimos are "at the bottom of the hierarchy of ethnic groups in so far as education, income, health and power" (p. 76).

It is believed the Eskimos migrated from north-central Asia some 4,000 years ago. They settled into an extremely harsh environment and thus have remained isolated from the world. Contact with Western society has been minimal until fairly recently. It is a culture struggling to survive the rapid changes that are taking place.

The first changes occurred in the 1700's when the Russians entered the area for the purpose of obtaining furs. They became the Eskimos' first white teachers for reasons of trade and religion. The Russian Orthodox Church attempted to impart Christian morality and ceremony to the Natives. Its impact is quite evident to this day. Following the Russians, in the late 1800's, came the Moravian missionaries in the Kuskokwim area, Catholic missionaries in the Yukon, and Presbyterian missionaries in the north. Their concerns were basically with "converting these heathens". The missionaries were the educators until the Bureau of Indian Affairs began establishing schools in the 1930's. Currently, the BIA schools are being phased out and replaced with state operated school districts. Boarding schools are being eliminated as well and small schools are being constructed in

most of the villages. In summation, white people have entered Eskimo land mainly for commerce, religious reasons and because of government agencies.

The Eskimo economy has also changed, from one of total subsistence hunting and fishing, to one based on subsistence and welfare. Jensen (1980) writes that there are no full-blooded Eskimo physicians or lawyers. Most of those who are employed are paraprofessionals or working in service and construction industries. The Eskimos' status is largely affected by their low academic success. As Salisbury (1969) put it,

> Because of the Eskimo's poor academic preparation and his inability to communicate his feelings and ideas, his self-concept becomes imbued with deep feelings of inferiority and inadequacy every time he meets an academic and social obstacle he cannot surmount (p. 31).

The position paper of the Western Regional Resource Center in Anchorage explains that "the present methods of instruction have not proved adequate to foster a high proficiency of communication skills and partially because of this, a large segment of the Native population drop out of school" (p. 18). In 1965 there was a 30% drop-out rate in grade school, 50 to 80% in high school and 97% among the small number going to college. The rates decreased in 1975 to nearly zero grade-school drop-outs, 25% in high school and 50% in college (statistics from Jensen, 1980). These figures do not account for the number of students attending public school that do not par-

ticipate. Some students go to school because of enforcement or because there is no where else to go in the village or town.

Students go to school with varying language abilities. Some are unable to speak a word of English. Others know some nouns and verbs, some speak a kind of pidgin English while others speak English fluently. Jones (1971) explains that the "situation regarding language development which confronts the average classroom teacher of Alaskan Natives is bewildering at best" (p. 198). Most of the Eskimos under the age of fifteen are minimally literate but "the proportion declines as the age group rises until perhaps only one-half or two-thirds of the fifty-year-olds and a much smaller percentage of those over 65 can read and write" (Jensen, p. 337). Jensen reports, too, that more than 50% of the Yupik people still speak their original language but fewer of the Inupiaq do (p. 337).

According to Streiff (1980), the nearly 3,000 Eskimo children of Western Alaska are almost three grade levels below their ages in reading comprehension. As stated in the Bock and Feldman study (1970), the Eskimo children scored significantly below the norms on all test items in the English Vocabulary Tests. Kleinfeld (1978) attributes the lack of Native students' college success to poor communication skills (p. 20). From my personal experience teaching language arts and social studies to rural Eskimo students, the problems they have in listening, speaking, reading and writing, are quite evident.

Factors Affecting Language Ability

The studies by Kass (1966) and Serafica and Sigel (1978) demonstrate that reading disabilities occur at the integration level. They are not related to intelligence. The results of the studies by Downing and Ollila (1975), Teasdale (1968), and Goldstein and John (1964) all show that the environment directly relates to a person's language abilities. An unfavorable environment can inhibit the development of language skills. Children who come from a home background where there is little exposure to reading and writing and language usage suffer from this by having greater reading disabilities. The Downing and Ollila study showed that the children from the culture which provided few experiences of literary behavior "showed greater cognitive confusion about reading and writing". The extensive study by Streiff (1980), in Western Alaska, found that more access to library materials and the higher use of them related to higher reading comprehension (p. 222).

Related to these environmental factors (the amount of exposure to reading and writing type situations) are the results of the studies by Downing (1972), Oliver (1976), Downing and Ollila, and Goldstein and John. These studies show that a child's progress and abilities depend on his understanding of just what reading and writing is when he/she is presented with these tasks in school. Cognitive confusion (the main symptom of reading disability) results from the beginner's

lack of understanding of the relationship between spoken words and symbols and of the purpose of reading and writing. Linguistic knowledge, too, is necessary in the reading process Streiff explains. Grammatical categories and relationships, phonological information, and semantic information are required in order to read (p. 42).

Bean and Pardi (1979) summarize the research that shows what a student brings to the material to be read determines his/her ability to understand it. They explain that "comprehension is a direct function of prior knowledge. The information brought to reading by the brain is more important than information provided by print" (p. 145).

The other aspect brought out by Downing (1972) and Deutsch (1965) is that a "cumulative deficit" will result from this cognitive confusion. If development is inhibited (by such things as environmental factors and lack of understanding of the reading and writing process) then the child will become more marked as he/she progresses through school.

The Eskimos' Situation

Streiff believes that a variety of factors, alone or in combination, account for the poor reading performance among Eskimo children. She explains them as being, 1) an inadequate grasp of the language of the schools, 2) inadequate background information, and 3) such other elements as socio-economic background and cultural milieu (p. 23). She explains that the

Eskimos have a linguistic inadequecy for reading in English. They lack appropriate knowledge of the world to read materials prepared for children of different backgrounds, They are geographically isolated and they are impoverished (p. 226).

Streiff makes it clear that the Eskimo children are as capable of linguistic and cognitive achievement as the children in American mainstream society "if they were presented appropriate opportunities" (p. 59). In sum, the Eskimo children have vastly different life experiences, beliefs, values, and ways of explaining things that happen in the world. Kleinfeld (1978), as others, found a variety of intelligence measures for different cultures. The Eskimos are high in perceptual skills and low in abstract verbal abilities (as shown, too, by Bock and Feldman, 1970). The studies by Katz and Teasdale (1968) and Bock and Feldman suggest also that the Eskimo may develop linguistic abilities at a slower rate than western subjects.

The Eskimo people inhabit some of the most isolated and extreme environments on earth. As Streiff points out, they are culturally and linguistically different and have little contact with mainstream America. They live in some of the most impoverished regions in the United States. Their economic picture is very bleak. They are of a culture with no tradition of literacy. The cultural heritage has been transmitted orally.

The Eskimos are not only very isolated from western society but their culture also has a very low degree of verbal interaction. As Coles (1977) writes, "young boys and girls often avoid sentences because their parents are quite content to use one word or two, rather than make a statement or ask a question or give a command" (p. 193). He explains, too, that one word may take the place of dozens of sentences (p. 192). As Collier points out, "the information procedure amongst the Eskimos was terse in verbal explanation and highly non-verbal in demonstration". He continues to show that the Eskimo has no tradition of formal schools and that learning has been done through experience and observing demonstration. Kleinfeld (1973) echoes this in suggesting that Eskimo children learn more by watching adults than by receiving verbal instruction. They were educated by example, not by verbal command. They did not use tongue lashings, they employed ostracism. Collier (1973) succinctly explains:

> The impact of White schools on Eskimo learning affected not only style and content but also the method and focus of learning. Traditional Eskimo learning was fundamentally a training in observation and the analysis of this sensory reception. Content was frequently nonverbal and ecological in experience--weather prediction, ice prediction, warnings of blizzards, the drift of game. White learning shifted attention to the verbal and the literate, which had survival value in abstract circumstances usually unrelated to the natural world surrounding the school. Humanly, the instructor's role was shifted from village men to strangers teaching content administered from Seattle and Washington D.C. (p. 39).

The purpose of oral communication "in the village culture was for maintenance of day-to-day transactions in village life. It was not regarded as a means of manipulating the environment, influencing others or as a tool for making way in the world" (Salisbury, 1969, p. 27). With the arrival of White traders, missionaries, teachers and government agencies, the purpose of speaking English was "to communicate with a paternalistic establishment. It was for dealing with authority that was there to help the Eskimo because they knew what was best for him" (Salisbury, p. 30). Speaking English for the Eskimo has always been done from a subordinate role.

The Eskimos are of a culture and environment where there is little experience with the purpose of literacy and little exposure to reading and writing behavior, liguistic concepts or language usage. It is evident that the Eskimos' situation clearly coincides with the results of research that attempts to explain the causes of reading disabilities and poor language skills. The factors of environment, economics, history and cultural traits suggest that the burden for academic achievement lies on the shoulders of the educational system. The Eskimos' communication problems stem from conflicting cross-cultural values (Salisbury, p. 29), not from any lack of intelligence due to genetic inferiority as Griese (1971) actually concludes.

Implications for Curriculum and Instruction

Hikel (1977) explains that "present policy makers seem to desire a carbon copy of the standard, white middle-class curriculum rather than taking into account the Native heritage and culture" (p. 404). The Bock and Feldman study suggested that the educational procedures and school materials geared for Westerners may not be appropriate for the Eskimo. Kleinfeld (1973) called for a modification of traditional instructional practice due to the very low English verbal ability of the Eskimo students. Kleinfeld (1972) also wrote that with their limited English skills and being not accustomed to the highly structured textbooks and programmed learning materials, the Eskimo students rarely understand what is expected of them in the classroom. They are clearly at a disadvantage in a conventional setting. "The workings of the Western academic establishment may seem to the Eskimo as mysterious as nature" (Salisbury, p. 28).

To overcome the language based problems, different approaches need to be taken in language skill development. Learning can be enhanced if the school system is geared to fit the Eskimo childrens' cultural background and language needs. Two areas need to be adapted to best suit the Eskimos' situation: educational methods and the teacher.

Appropriate Methods

Eskimo students often lack the necessary understanding of the reading and writing process. To aid these children in obtaining language skills, it would be beneficial to spend a special period of time in preparing for and discussing the purposes of reading and writing. Downing and Ollila point out that it cannot be assumed by the teacher that the students know concepts like 'word', 'letter' and 'number'. More time should be spent preparing linguistic concepts because of the environmental conditions and cultural traits of the Eskimo.

Currently, the tasks of reading and writing are being introduced to Eskimo students before they are cognitively ready. They are possibly being asked to read and write before they have sufficiently developed their listening and speaking skills. This results in cognitive confusion at the integration level, thus, reading disabilities occur. This confusion can remain through their schooling and affect their performance in all subject areas and achievement testing. The listening and speaking skills should be far better developed than they are before they are asked to read and write. Many teachers cannot understand why the inability to follow simple, oral instructions is so prevalent among Eskimo students. The studies previously mentioned (Bock and Feldman, Katz and Teasdale) that suggest the Eskimos may develop linguistic

abilities at a slower rate than Western subjects, further support the need to delay the introduction of these reading and writing tasks and concentrate on developing the listening and speaking skills first.

Streiff (1980) found that in Western Alaska, the Eskimo children were instructed through standard basal readers or with programmed readers (p. 6). The language experience approach may be used with these methods. This involves the children learning to read what they are interested in talking about. The teacher writes down words, ideas or stories that the children dictate. Burmeister (1978) explains that the language experience approach "integrates all of the language arts areas: speaking, listening, reading and writing and it may be especially useful with culturally different children for whom interesting reading material is hard to find" (p. 17). This technique would help the Eskimo children develop the linguistic concepts they need and show them the purpose for reading and writing.

A variety of ways can help all students with reading difficulties better comprehend written material in school subjects. These methods would be quite appropriate for the Eskimo student. They are: 1) prereading activities 2) guided reading 3) vocabulary work and 4) rewriting of text material. These methods are necessary because most of the material the Native students are asked to read is too difficult. Students are asked to read a social studies or a science

book that is written on the seventh grade reading level when the students' ability may be on the third or fourth grade level. Frustration and low self-esteem result and little learning takes place.

1) Prereading Activities

Research shows (Karahalios, Tonjes, and Towner, 1979) that prereading activities and instruction increase student performance on post tests. Prereading activities are whatever take place prior to the students actually reading the material. Brown and Tousey (1973) write that at least one-fifth the time of a lesson should be spent in preparing the student for the material. This involves such things as motivating the students and introducing the material and relating it to information previously acquired by the students. Burmeister (1978) writes of the need to preview the assignment in regards to the particular students, preview the vocabulary that is likely to be difficult, state the rate of reading that is appropriate and clarify the purpose for reading the assignment.

This all pertains to research relating to advance organizers. As previously mentioned (Bean and Pardi, 1979), what a student brings to the material determines his/her ability to understand it. Advance organizers enhance a person's prior knowledge of a topic to be encountered in text material. The research by Mayer (1980) showed that subjects

provided with advance organizers performed relatively better in some instances. The advance organizers were best for disorganized material. His subjects, though, were in college. To many Eskimo students, all text material is disorganized. If prereading activities take place, the stage should be set for the material that is to be encountered.

2) Guided Reading

A variety of guided reading procedures exist and as Lewis (1979) states, it is generally agreed they result in greater understanding. Burmeister explains guided reading as being for students who are reading material that is on their instructional, not independent, reading level or below. Lewis suggests, as one method, that the section of the text should be surveyed (chapter titles and subtitles read, vocabulary lists, graphs, maps and chapter questions scanned) then the books closed and the students orally state (brainstorm) everything that can be remembered from the preview. The teacher writes all this information down on the board. The students then can look back in the text to add information not mentioned. The results are discussed and organized into a diagram or outline. Then the text is read silently, followed by some post tests. This is one example of guided reading. Others involve having the student stop at certain points in the reading to consider questions or statements about the material.

One procedure I use is to direct the students to the page, sometimes to the particular paragraph or section, point out pictures, charts and maps and ask questions or present problems related to them. Instructions and questions appear on a ditto paper. The questions come from the various levels of the cognitive domain. To build confidence I ask a good number of factual or literal level questions, the answers to which are in order as the student reads. After this, higher level questions are asked periodically that require interpretation, application, analysis or evaluation. These type of questions appear every so often amidst the many literal level questions. The students follow these basic instructions: 1) read the question that is asked on the ditto 2) read the text where directed until the question is answered or discussed 3) answer the question on the paper 4) read the next question and return to the text with it in mind.

The students complete the guided reading papers over a certain subject or section and they can be used as a study sheet, for discussion, as a basis for further exercises or related activities. These hand-made dittos also allow the teacher an opportunity to include humor and comments pertaining to the particular group of students causing a higher interest level in the work.

All the methods pertain to setting the stage (the prereading activities of mentioning reading rate, motivating and preparing for vocabulary and concepts to be encountered), the

students read the material silently, it is discussed and then extended (related) to other activities such as films, books on the subject, guest speaker and so on. For variety, the different methods can be employed but always with making it clear what sections should be read and which ones are to be skimmed over or entirely omitted. All material is not equally important and there is no sense in not making this known to the students. Their attention should be directed to the information that is of significance.

3) Vocabulary Work

Concern for the vocabulary involved in the written material in school subjects can be a part of the prereading activities, the guided reading and rewriting portions of the text. Patberg (1979) suggests the teacher survey the reading assignment and note potentially difficult vocabulary and then preteach these words using short, direct techniques that make the reading assignment easier and more understandable. Vocabulary concerns are peculiar to the specific subject area. Wiseman (1973) believes the student must face two types of vocabulary in their school subjects. There is the "general vocabulary that deals with everyday working words and there is the technical vocabulary" (p. 32). The technical vocabulary would be words like "urban" and "petroleum". The general vocabulary involves words like "'strike' and 'bed' that take on different meaning when they are linked with concepts like work stoppage and ore

deposits" (p. 32). Thus the vocabulary takes on meanings that relate to the subject. Familiar words may stand for new, unfamiliar concepts. These "simple" words as well as the technical words need to be previewed, discussed, reviewed and reinforced to prevent the student from rejecting the information. This is what will happen if a student cannot comprehend the vocabulary or concepts presented to him/her according to Valentine and Franchs (1973).

4) Rewriting Text Material

Because familiar words often stand for unfamiliar concepts, readability formulas are not necessarily accurate in rating textbooks. Short sentences and single and double syllable words often contain a number of abstract concepts that are not measured by readability formulas. Thus the material is difficult enough without adding the confusion of long sentences, multisyllable words and disorganized sections. The teacher can simplify all this, Caldwell (1976) says, by rewriting text material to "control the vocabulary and syntactic complexity, to add words of high imagery, edit and add as much human interest as possible" (p. 71). Rewriting involves organizing or clustering the information into more compact, simplified units. I often summarize sections, chapters or units into short explanations written in clear language. I omit unnecessary details and write only the ideas that relate to the objectives of the lesson. It is a great deal of work but it can be extremely

successful because of the high interest level caused if the teacher writes to a particular group of Native students.

These four methods of facilitating reading comprehension that have been briefly discussed could be implemented in and adapted to most grade levels. If they are not used, students will continue to reject information they cannot understand which stands to reason.

The study by Pell (1979) suggested other methods that assisted Eskimo students in improving their communication skills. She explains that the Native students she worked with were "seriously hampered in the 'regular' classroom by their inability to read and communicate in English" (p. 404). She concluded that higher achievement and lower drop-out rates occurred when the students were directly involved in their own goal-setting and "given latitude to work with the equipment or books of their choice" (p. 407). The other positive factor she mentions is the teacher meeting with and working individually with each student.

Jones (1971) reported several interesting factors that help the Native student be more successful in the English speaking classroom. She calls for "the reading material to be geared to the activities typically engaged in by the Alaskan Native children" (p. 200). She explains that "when alien concepts are introduced, they should be related to some familiar aspect of Alaskan culture" (p. 202). She mentions

that, because of language interference, "the use of pronouns and the importance of prepositions in English" (p. 201) should be specifically worked on. Jones writes, too, of the need for Native students to understand that "language is talk written down" (p. 201).

The results of the Bock and Feldman study with Eskimos in Wainwright, Alaska showed that "instruction in English may not be maximally effective, especially in the first few grades" (p. 104). Bilingual education may alleviate the problems Eskimos face at the beginning of their school experience as well as provide a variety of other benefits, the least certainly not being respect for their own language and culture. Bilingual education for the Eskimo is of major concern but for the purpose of this paper, it cannot be gone into in depth. It may certainly increase motivation, self-concept, provide necessary linguistic knowledge, cognitive flexibility and divergent thought. There are few qualified teachers. Bilingual education is being pursued in Alaska but it is in the beginning stages. Materials are being developed and teachers are being trained. It has been only recently that the Eskimo language was put down in a uniform writing system.

With or without bilingual education, a variety of methods are known to help improve the language skills of the Eskimo. A connection needs to made between the knowledge available and the teachers in need of it. Besides these methods that are suitable to the needs of the Eskimo student, the teacher must be suitable as well.

Teachers

There are many considerations regarding effective teachers of Eskimo children. The concern here is with those attributes that affect the communication skills of the Eskimo student. Pell (1979) encouraged the teaching staff "to become thoroughly familiar with the ethnic background of their students" (p. 407) in order to successfully help them with their language skills. Kleinfeld's extensive study concerning effective teachers of Eskimo students showed that teachers who succeeded in eliciting a high level of verbal participation tended to respond to the students with a high level of personal warmth. She explains the positive results of making academic demands after a comfortable rapport with the students has been established. In this atmosphere, the Indian and Eskimo students performed significantly better on intelligence tests.

Collier (1977) writes that a "relaxed, fulfilled student internalizes and communicates better than the rigid, aching student who has lost his sense of well being" (p. 113). A tense, uncomfortable student will withdraw and not participate. The teacher must create the most beneficial atmosphere for learning to take place. The problems are in informing teachers of how best to do this. Much rests on the teacher's personality.

This teacher warmth and display of personal interest in the student opposes the style most Western teachers are familiar with. Most have been trained to keep a position of professional distance. Village students often interpret facial

expressions, moodiness, and this impersonalism as disinterest or hostility on the part of the teacher.

Kleinfeld suggests facilitating personal warmth by developing relationships with the students outside the classroom to help remove this feeling of professionalism. She also encourages joking in the classroom to put students at ease. Light teasing and joking can be done about occurrences away from school and can be used in disciplining instead of anger.

Non-verbal communication is very important to Indian and Eskimo students; smiling, touching, and close body distance, assuming the same postural level with the students, sitting with them, eating lunch together and other such things aid in creating this friendlier, more comfortable atmosphere.

Along with this personal warmth, Kleinfeld mentions another factor that is a part of effective teaching. The successful teacher actively demands a higher level of academic work. Teachers in a cross-cultural setting are likely to have difficulties in determining academic requirements. Also, Indian and Eskimo students have grown accustomed in the school situation to avoiding difficult learning tasks. Many teachers then compensate by not demanding work that the students are really capable of doing. Kleinfeld explains that once a personal relationship is developed with the students, they are able to interpret the teacher's demands as an expression of personal concern.

In Conclusion

This paper began with a statement from Collier that concerned the failure of Eskimo education. He writes, too, that "positive education for Native Americans has baffled educators for decades" (p. 110). The education of Alaskan Natives has not been successful but it is no longer as baffling as it once was. A great deal of research and sincere concern has provided us with positive measures, more appropriate for these children. Methods exist that can be quite helpful. More conducive teaching manners are known.

If teachers are hired from the "lower 48" with no prior exposure to ethnic learning styles and cultural variances, and they find that no matter what they do, the students generally fail or perform poorly, they are likely to develop a bad attitude. They may take on the job as a very "unprejudiced" person but their methods of teaching that fit in White suburbia fail drastically when applied to the rural Alaskan Native. Witnessing this repeated failure, they soon point their finger at the child. Many conclude that there must be something wrong with these students, not themselves or the education system.

Many people are hired and then venture into an Indian or Eskimo community, completely ignorant of the cultural traits, language considerations, and appropriate teaching style that are required of them to be effective. They go into it ignorant but with good intentions. There is information available

that will help teachers enter these communities with some awareness as well as good intentions. As previously mentioned, a major problem is making the connection between the knowledge that is available and those in need of it.

There is the question of purpose. Are the goals of this education to assimilate the Eskimo into Anglo American culture? Is it for survival purposes in their own environment or in Western society? Maybe the purpose of this education (to paraphrase Collier, 1973) is to "provide the opportunity for the Eskimo to excel successfully in the modern world as an Eskimo" (p. 125).

The situation, in one way, is actually quite clear. The more Westernized the Eskimo becomes, the better he is able to communicate in Western society. The process is currently taking place at the expense of the Eskimo culture. The affect of the ever increasing availability and exposure to television remains to be seen.

The Eskimos are in a quite unique language situation. The education system must adapt to fit the needs of this situation to allow the Eskimo access to education and the capability of expressing themselves. If their situation is not considered and their language problems ignored, they are being denied education and the right to make their own decisions. With the rapid encroachment of Western society, they may well need far better communication skills in order to defend themselves. The least the education system can

provide is assistance in enabling the Eskimo to communicate their own decisions regarding what they desire.

The education system has come a very long way from punishing the Eskimo children for speaking their own language. Further changes in educational procedures obviously must be implemented, though, to prevent what Collier calls "educating the child out of his cultural self".

REFERENCES

Bean, T., Pardi, R. A field test of a guided reading strategy, Journal of Reading, 1979, 23, 144-147

Bock, R., Feldman, C. Cognitive studies among residents of Wainwright, Alaska, Arctic Anthropology, 1970, VII 1, 101-105

Brown, C., Tousey, C. Reading in the social studies: some observations of the obvious, Reading in the Social Studies, 1973, 13, 11-16

Burmeister, L. Reading Strategies For Middle and Secondary School Teachers. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1978

Cardinell, C. Rewriting social studies material to lower read-levels, The Reading Teacher, 1976, Nov. 168-172

Coles, R. Eskimos, Chicanos, Indians. Boston, Toronto: Little Brown and Co., 1977

Collier, John Jr. Alaskan Eskimo Education: A Film Analysis of Cultural Confrontation In The Schools. San Francisco, Calif.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973

Collier, J. A classroom is not a sheep camp. Paper presented at California State University, San Francisco, 1977

Deutsch, M. The role of social class in language development and cognition, American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1965, 35, 78-87

Downing, J. Childrens' developing concepts of spoken and written language, Journal of Reading Behavior, 1972, 4, 1-19

Downing, J. Ollila, L. Cultural differences in childrens' concepts of reading and writing, British Journal of Educational Psychology, 1975, 45, 312-316

Goldstein, L., John, V. The social context of language acquisition, Merill-Palmer Quarterly, 1964, 1, 265-275

Griese, A. Focusing of students of different cultural backgrounds, the Eskimo and Indian pupil, special problems in reading comprehension, Elementary English, 1971, 48, 229-234

Hikel, J. Cross-cultural education in Alaska, not how but why? Phi Delta Kappan, 1977, 58, 403-404

Jensen, R. Eskimos, Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups. Cambridge Mass. and London, England: Harvard Univ. Press, 1980, p. 336

Jones, V. Training teachers of English for Alaska's Native children, Elementary English, 1971, 48, 198-202

Karahalios, S., Tonjes, M., Towner, J. Using advance organizers to improve comprehension of a content text, Journal of Reading, 1979, 22, 706-708

Kass, C. Psycholinguistic disabilities of children with reading problems, Exceptional Children, 1966, 4, 533-539

Katz, F., Teasdale, G. Psycholinguistic abilities of children from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, Australian Journal of Psychology, 1968, 20, 154-159

Kleinfeld, J. Effective Teachers of Indian and Eskimo High School Students. Alaska: Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, 1972

Kleinfeld, J. Intellectual strengths in culturally different groups: an Eskimo illustration, Review of Educational Research, 3, 1973

Kleinfeld, J. Alaska Native Students and College success, ISER Occasional Papers, University of Alaska, 14, 1978

Lewis, J. Directed discovery reading: catalyst to reading in the content areas, Journal of Reading, 1979, 22, 714-719

Mayer, R. Advance organizers that compensate for the organization of text, Journal of Educational Psychology, 70, 1978, 880-886

Oliver, M. The development of language concepts of pre-primary Indian children, Language Arts, 1976, 865-869

Patberg, J. Validation of reading strategies in secondary content areas, Journal of Reading, 1979, 22, 332-335

Pell, S. A communication skills project for disadvantaged Aleut, Eskimo, and Indian ninth and tenth graders, Journal of Reading, 1979, Feb., 404-407

Salisbury, L. Communication for survival, the COPAN program, Journal of English as a Second Language, 1969, vol. IV, 25-34

Serafica, F., Sigel, I. Styles of categorization and reading disability, Journal of Reading Behavior, 1970, 2, 105-113

Stodolsky, S., Lesser, G. Learning patterns in the disadvantaged, Harvard Educational Review, 1967, 37, 22-69

Streiff, V. Reading Comprehension and Language Proficiency Among Eskimo Children: New York: Arno Press, 1980

Valentine, F., Franchs, O. To teach a social studies concept--chunk it! Reading Horizons, 1979, 20, 46-53

Vallee, F. Eskimos of Canada as a minority group: social and cultural perspectives. Education in the North, 1972, 24-41

Western Regional Rescource Center, Position Paper, Anchorage, Alaska, 1980

Wiseman, M. Reading skills can be taught in social studies classes, Reading in the Social Studies, 1973, 13, 31-35